

The LAY-MONK.

*Ubi, ubi est,
Diu celari non potest.* Ter.

From WEDNESDAY, December 16. to FRIDAY, December 18. 1713.

I Have already acquainted my Reader, that from the first Institution of our Society, we have all had a watchful Eye upon NED FREEMAN. It is wonderful to us, as often as we think of it, how this Gentleman came first to enter himself a Member of the *Lay-Monastery*. His Humour is airy, free, and volatile; He is always sure of giving Pleasure to the Company he is in, but never sure of being long pleas'd in it himself. This makes him very agreeable, but somewhat inconstant.

We were scarce settled in our *Lay-Convent*, when NED began to enlarge his Freedom, by making short Excursions in the Neighbourhood. At the same time he was frequently nibbling at the Orders of our Fraternity. He was content to spend Hours with us every Day, but did not care to be oblig'd to sit with us twice a Week. What need is there, says he, that you shou'd appoint set Days for Business, when we are all in the same House, and can at any time, over a Bottle after Dinner, read Papers, or start a Subject for a new Essay, and, in short, be as wise, and yet as sociable as we please?

The Society being willing to oblige so lively a Member, came immediately to the following Resolution.

Order'd, That when Pen, Ink and Paper shall be call'd for, in order to the Secretary's taking Minutes for any future Essays, a Flask of Champaign shall be set on the Table at the same time; but no Member shall be at Liberty to call for a second Flask, except Sir EUSTACE LOCKER.

It was desir'd at the same time, that for the future Mr. FREEMAN wou'd send for his Lace and Linnen, by his own Servant, the Society having been inform'd that a handsome young Girl had been twice to enquire for him (suppos'd from his Sempstres) and that she had *Black Eyes* and a good Complexion.

NED FREEMAN, after this last Order, was pretty regular for a Week. He then reliev'd himself by a Coffee-house, which he found out about half a Mile distant.

Here NED used to spend much of his Time; and from hence it was that he brought us the first Intelligence of the Justice of Peace, who had slander'd us, and of the Design of plundering the *Lay-Monastery*, of which I have given an Account in a former Paper.

In the mean time, it is not to be suppos'd but that a Person of NED's Gayety has had many Temptations to leave us. We no sooner publish'd a Direction where Letters might be left for the Society, but we receiv'd every Day Dispatches for Mr. FREEMAN. His whole Male and Female Acquaintance seem'd to have taken the Alarm, and were resolv'd to raise a Hue and Cry after him. He was so ingenuous as to communicate many of these Letters to the Society. Some of them reproach him very severely for breaking his Word at certain Appointments for Cards and Dancing. Another from Two Sisters threatens him with a Visit; they rally him for turning Anchorite; desire an Account of the Rules of his Order, his Exercises, Penances, and Mortifications, and long to see him in his *Lay-Monastick Habit*.

The

(Price Three Half-pence.)

The Society, finding these Enquiries multiply daily, have had some Thoughts of putting forth an *Advertisement*, desiring all Persons who had any Claim upon Mr. FREEMAN, to send in their Demands by a certain Day. But while this Matter was under Debate, NED made an Elopement, and was not heard of by any of the Society for four Days. He is now return'd, and says he has only been ranging like a Bee, to gather Honey for the Hive: He tells us, That in his Absence he has made a notable Discovery of a *Lay-Nunnery*, which is newly erected. We were extremely well diverted with his Account of this new Foundation, but took it only for Raillery, and a pleasant way of excusing his Absence, till the following Letter confirm'd the Truth of NED's Intelligence.

To Mr. JACOB RAVENSCROFT.

S I R,
 ' WITHOUT any Preliminary Discourse to acquaint you with the Design of this Letter, you must know at once that I am one of a new Order, who distinguish themselves by the Title of *Lay-Nuns*. As you have given the World an Account of your Institution and Way of Living, so we thought it not amiss to inform you of ours, and to give you to understand that we can and have prohibited the Conversation of Men, with as steadfast a Resolution as you seem or ought to have done that of Women, only with this Difference that as we fancy you exclude us, according to the old Saying, *because the Grapes are sour*, so we protest against you because they are sweet; which shews a greater Self-denial in us, and consequently that we are greater Philosophers. As we assert a Superiority in this, so we do also in the Strictness and Severity of our Lives; we don't as much as admit the Sight of a Man; nay, we had the Superstition the other Day, to toss a Cat from the Garret Window, because it had the Misfortune to be of the Masculine Gender. We are not insensible of the wicked Construction you will put upon our Sisterhood, and tell us, that we are only the Leavings of Five and Thirty or Forty Years; and that from a Distaste which Men naturally bear to that Age, we have, to avoid their Coldness, taken this Opportunity of withdrawing our selves from the World: To convince you of which Error, I must tell you, that lately there came a Lady to us, who desired to be admitted as a Probationer, before she would take upon her the Vows of our Order. She had not pass'd above two Days with us, till we discover'd an unusual

Roughness about her Face, which made us violently suspect her to be an Impostor. At length some undeniable Symptoms confirming our Suspicion, we discover'd this pretended Lay-Sister of ours to be your dear Lay-Brother NED FREEMAN: He made several Excuses and Apologies for himself, and at last own'd that it was powerful Love which put him upon this Adventure; and would have given a great many Instances of several who had made use of the like Stratagems, and particularly he talk'd of one *Jupiter*, who had play'd a great many Pranks of the same Nature. We do therefore strictly forbid your Sex any Communication with us for the future, except by Letter; and we desire the Paper may not be gilt. As we have not fully resolv'd upon all our Orders, we shall content our selves by only telling you, that 'tis in our Power to be as self-denying as you Men: If you speak in Favour of us in your next, we shall proceed to give you a more ample Account of what has been transacted among us. We rest your Affectionate Sisters.

REBECCA SINGLE, *Secretary*.

Note, The Two North Country Maiden Sisters, who appear'd last Summer at *Hampstead*, may be admitted among us, provided they will bring Certificates that they are not yet Forty.

I must not conclude this Paper without acquainting our dear Lay-Sisters, that NED FREEMAN denies the Adventure charg'd upon him in the foregoing Letter; and says, it was some sly Youth that took upon him to personate him. However, as he has own'd he is no Stranger to the *Lay-Nunnery*, we shall take Care to examine further into this Matter.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

The Gentlemen that have been educated at *Merchant-Taylors School*, are desired to meet together at the *Swan Tavern* in *Exchange Alley*, on Monday the 21st Instant, and every following Monday, at Five in the Evening.

Yesterday was Publish'd

Pre-existence, a Poem, in Imitation of *Milton*. Printed for *John Clark*, at the *Bible and Crown* in the *Old-Change*, near *St. Paul's*: And may also be had of *J. Roberts* in *Warwick-lane*, *J. Harrison* by the *Royal-Exchange*, *A. Dodd* without *Temple-Bar*, and *R. Bond* at *Charing-Cross*.

This Paper may be had at *Mr. Harrison's* by the *Royal Exchange*; *Mrs. Dodd's* and *Mrs. Boulter's* without *Temple-Bar*; and *Mrs. Bond's* at *Charing-Cross*.

L O N D O N, Printed: And Sold by James Roberts in Warwick-Lane, where and at the Places above-mention'd Advertisements are taken in, at Three Shillings each.

